

Aislyn Xanthos

USC Annenberg Public Relations and Advertising Masters

Comprehensive Exam 2026: DICK'S Sporting Goods PAID

23 March 2026

### Creative Brief

#### **Target Audience**

The primary target audience is Gen Z event-goers, ages from 16 to 27, who are highly engaged in sneaker culture, music festivals, and sporting events. This audience values exclusivity, authenticity, and experiences they can share on social media. Many follow sneaker drops closely and are active on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat. They enjoy limited-edition releases, streetwear culture, and immersive brand experiences. They are likely attending high-energy cultural events such as Lollapalooza and major global sporting events like the FIFA World Cup, where they are open to discovering exclusive products and unique activations.

#### **Media Appearances**

The campaign will rely on a multi-channel approach designed to reach Gen Z both in person and online.

Ads will appear through:

- **OOH:** Digital billboards, festival signage, transit shelters, and city buses near event venues.
- **Social Media:** TikTok and Instagram content, influencer partnerships, geo-targeted mobile ads, location announcements, and live event content/drops.
- **On-site experiential:** The Footlocker Sneaker Truck itself will be a moving, physical advertisement.

- **Event awareness and digital screens:** Physical and digital ads at the venue to direct consumers to the truck and create awareness of the launch. (Have employees working the truck physically tell attendees of the event about and where the truck is while wearing the merchandise itself)

## **The Goal**

The primary goal is to increase brand relevance and cultural credibility among Gen Z while driving immediate product sales through limited sneaker drops. A secondary goal is to position DICK'S Sporting Goods as an innovative, experience-first brand, not just a traditional retailer. The campaign aims to generate buzz, social sharing, and foot traffic around the Sneaker Truck activation.

## **Current vs. Desired**

Currently, DICK'S Sporting Goods is widely viewed as a trusted, family-friendly sporting goods retailer that is reliable, accessible, and performance-driven. However, among Gen Z, it may not be perceived as deeply embedded in streetwear, sneaker culture, or live event experiences.

The desired perception is to reposition DICK'S as a culture-forward, trend-aware brand that actively participates in music, sports, and youth culture. Through the Sneaker Truck, the brand becomes more agile, exclusive, and experiential, aligning itself with the energy and spontaneity that Gen Z values.

## **Need for the Ad**

Gen Z consumers are moving away from traditional retail and toward experiences, limited releases, and culturally relevant brand interactions. At the same time, competition in the sneaker and sportswear space is increasingly driven by direct-to-consumer drops and hype culture. This campaign allows DICK'S to bridge the gap between retail and experience by physically entering the spaces where Gen Z gathers. The ad is necessary to build awareness of the mobile activation, create urgency around limited drops, and signal a shift in brand identity. Ultimately, it helps DICK'S remain competitive by evolving from a place people shop to a brand people actively seek out and engage with in real time.

## Advertising Headline/Tagline

### **Campaign Tagline / Headline**

“THE DROP DOESN’T WAIT. FIND THE TRUCK.”

*Limited sneakers. One location. Right now.*

### **Print Media Placement of the Back Cover of Complex Magazine**

Complex is one of the most influential media outlets in sneaker culture and streetwear, making it a natural fit for reaching Gen Z sneaker enthusiasts. Its audience closely follows limited sneaker drops, artist collaborations, and festival culture. Placing the ad on the back cover ensures high visibility and premium placement, positioning the campaign as exclusive and culturally relevant. Readers already interested in sneaker releases and hype culture are more likely to respond to messaging about a mobile sneaker drop experience. The magazine’s strong connection to music, sports, and streetwear culture also aligns perfectly with events like Lollapalooza and the FIFA World Cup, where the Footlocker Sneaker Truck will appear.

### **OOH Placement**

Digital billboards and LED screens near entrances of major festivals and stadium districts

Example locations include:

- Festival entrance corridors at Lollapalooza
- Stadium districts hosting FIFA World Cup matches
- Transit shelters and city buses surrounding event venues

### **Rationale:**

These placements capture event attendees at the exact moment they arrive or gather for the festival or game. Digital billboards can display real-time messages, such as “Sneaker Truck Located (Here),” to

create urgency. City buses and transit shelters surrounding venues also reach large groups of Gen Z attendees traveling to the event. Because the sneaker truck is a mobile pop-up, proximity-based OOH advertising increases foot traffic and helps attendees quickly locate the activation.

### **Strategy Note**

The tagline “The Drop Doesn’t Wait. Find the Truck.” speaks directly to Gen Z sneaker culture, which revolves around urgency, exclusivity, and the thrill of limited releases. In sneaker communities, the term “drop” conveys scarcity and excitement, and many fans are accustomed to acting quickly to secure coveted pairs. By emphasizing that the drop “doesn’t wait,” the headline creates immediate urgency and fear of missing out (FOMO), a powerful motivator for Gen Z consumers who regularly engage with limited releases online.

The phrase “Find the Truck” reinforces the campaign's experiential nature. Instead of waiting in a mall store, consumers are encouraged to hunt for the mobile sneaker truck at cultural events. This transforms the act of buying sneakers into an interactive experience, which aligns with the campaign goal of increasing brand excitement and awareness. The short, punchy language is designed for OOH and print visibility, making it easy to read quickly in crowded festival environments. Overall, the creative strategy positions DICK’S as a dynamic, culture-driven brand that brings exclusive sneaker drops directly to where Gen Z gathers.